

INTRODUCTION

THE LEGACY OF ST. JOHN PAUL II

St. John Paul II or Karol Wojtyla is known to many as the pope and saint whose papacy, which lasted a quarter of a century, was instrumental in the transformation of the modern world. While some people call him a "sign of contradiction," there are those who just love him for his charming personality and for his profound thinking. In the Philippines, he is very much loved by Filipinos, and we can proudly say that he reciprocated such love by visiting our country twice, first in 1981 and then in 1995 as a pope (he in fact, visited Manila in 1973 when he was still a cardinal and the Archbishop of Krakow). His 1995 papal visit drew four million people, the biggest crowd ever for a papal visit, converging together to see Pope John Paul II.

St. John Paul II's pontificate came at a time in human history when immense human and societal transformations emerged. Of these various transformations, his voice was easily heard, and his influence was far and reaching. He is acclaimed as one of the most influential leaders of the 20th century, and his pontificate has influenced many important facets of human life: business and economy, family and society, international relations, religions, ethics, and politics. From his papal pronouncements and teachings to his travels and relations with different sectors of our society and governments, he has shaped not only the religious and spiritual life of the modern man but also his societal, political and cultural life as well. It is hard to imagine the whole of human life and history in the last quarter of the previous century without the influence of St. John Paul II. Indeed, his influence cannot be easily ignored. His efforts and achievements as a religious leader and a world figure are well known and documented. His pastoral works and trips around the world are sources of inspiration and joy to many.

As a genuine bridge builder, St. John Paul II significantly improved the Catholic Church's relations with Judaism, Islam, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the Anglican Communion. During his pontificate, the Vatican established foreign relations with the Jewish state of Israel, acknowledging that Christians and Jews are brothers. A significant achievement of his papacy was the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which embodies the Roman Catholic faith and the Church teachings and serves as the basis of the renewal of the Church in modern times.

Through his encyclical letters, St. John Paul II affirmed the dignity of the human person, more especially women and workers, and the importance of the family for the future of humanity. He recognized the energy of the youth and established a special relationship with them, gathering them during World Youth Day celebrations. However, he was also criticized for upholding the Church's teachings against artificial contraception and the ordination of women, the reform of the Liturgy, and for his ecumenical efforts.

As a philosopher and thinker, St. John Paul II participated and contributed to the discussions on the human person and his dignity, love, and marriage; his philosophical

works are spread across the areas of ethics, ontology, and axiology. He grounded his thoughts on Thomism and phenomenology. His philosophical writings would later find expressions in his papal writings, which would have an impact on the social doctrines of the Church.

Today, St. John Paul II is not only recognized as a beloved and faithful Vicar of Christ, a holy and religious person, but as a towering intellectual in his own right in the world. He is recognized as a philosopher, a theological thinker, and a social thinker. His papal and philosophical works have influenced our personal, as well as intellectual, social, and political affairs. Indeed, his life has been an inspiration to a lot of people - ordinary people, academicians, students, researchers, and religious.

The year 2020 marks the one-hundredth year of his birth. To commemorate his life and his thoughts and to celebrate his significant contributions and his impact in our modern society, the *John Paul II Centennial International Conference* was held on January 16-18, 2020 in Cebu City, Philippines. The theme of that international conference was “Celebrating the Life and Thoughts of John Paul II: The Man and Saint Who Transformed the Modern World.”

During the International Conference, we have also launched the *John Paul II Society of the Philippines*. We envision the JPSP as a society of academics (educators, students, priests, researchers) which promotes the study and research on the thoughts of St. John Paul II/Karol Wojtyła. The JPSP has the following aims: to encourage scholarship in the philosophy and papal teachings of St. John Paul II, to facilitate the exchange of ideas among St. John Paul II/Karol Wojtyła scholars, to encourage young scholars and other interested scholars to study the thoughts of St. John Paul II/Wojtyła, to attract and promote interest in his thoughts in the local and global academic community, to establish linkage with St. John Paul II groups and societies/associations in other countries.

SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE OF *PHILOSOPHIA*

In this *Special Commemorative Issue of Philosophia: International Journal of Philosophy*, we collected selected papers that were presented in the conference. These represent the richness and profundity of Karol Wojtyła/St. John Paul II’s thoughts. This collection (of papers covers a wide range of topics from philosophy, theology, science, politics, and ethics. The authors either interpret Wojtyła/John Paul II’s ideas or relate his thoughts on ethics, anthropology, culture, and religion to other philosophies or apply his thoughts and teachings to contemporary issues or subject matters like human dignity, marriage, family, love, values, society, dialogue, and gender issues. The authors are different scholars – religious, academicians, teachers, and even graduate students, and this shows the influence of Wojtyła or St. John Paul II among scholars.

St. John Paul II’s contribution to the dialogue between religion and science is perhaps one of the least recognizable among his legacies. Thus, it is but fitting that we present the first article on this subject matter. In the article *From Ideological Fundamentalism to Critical Openness: An Urgent Challenge for Religion and Science*. Marek Słomka premised his discussion about critical openness as the challenge for

religion and science on St. John Paul II's profound message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on the theory of evolution. He argues that there is still a strong need for scientific education among Christians to avoid mistakes known from the past, and (to) build a new open and creative dialogue between religion and science. The pope promoted this in his official letter to the director of the Vatican Observatory in 1988.

The *Theology of the Body* is perhaps the most profound articulation and catechesis of St. John Paul II on the human person and marriage. In the article *The Notion of "Man's Original Status" in John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, Jove Jim S. Aguas focuses on the philosophical foundation of the notion of the original status of man discussed in the *Theology of the Body*. He notes that many of the notions like the human person, human dignity, love, sexuality, marriage, concupiscence, and continence that St. John Paul II discussed in his Wednesday catechesis have their philosophical expressions in his earlier writings. In the article, Aguas discusses man's original state, the unity of man and woman, and man's original experience.

There is a growing discussion on redesigning human nature into a "new human." Alma S. Espartinez, in her article *And the Machine Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us: Refiguring the New Human in Karol Wojtyla's Christian Personalism* explores refiguring the concept of a new human as proposed by transhumanism in light of Karol Wojtyla's Christian Personalism. She positions Wojtyla's Christian personalism vis-à-vis transhumanism, which attempts to enhance humans into posthuman persons to redesign human nature, into a conversation in an attempt (that attempts) to examine the ethical implications of human enhancement from the personalist concept of the person. She also inquires into the problematic moral issues arising from the ethics of enhancement.

There are many ways and perspectives we can understand the thoughts of St. John Paul II, especially his encyclical writings. In the article *Reading John Paul II's Fides et Ratio in the Light of Jürgen Habermas' Postmetaphysical Thinking: Towards a Dialogue with the Secular World*, Jose Conrado A. Estafia suggests that John Paul II's *Fides et Ratio* can be read today in the light of Jürgen Habermas' so-called postmetaphysical thinking. He stresses that this would lead the Catholic Church to a dialogue with the secular world. Through dialogue, we can promote awareness of complementarity between the Church and the world, and carry on the appeal of John Paul II in *Fides et Ratio* to further this dialogue without fear.

One core concept of Wojtyla's philosophy is love. For Wojtyla, only a person can love and is to be loved. Corazon T. Toralba, in her article *The Transformative Power of Love*, used Wojtyla's notion of virtuous love to examine how virtuous love could be transformative. She explains how the person's autonomy is further enhanced, and personality is reaffirmed if a person learns how to love. In her article, she discusses the objective and subjective elements of love and shows the integration of these two elements into a love worthy of the beloved and the lover.

There is a complementarity between the thoughts on human individuality of Karol Wojtyla and Edith Stein, and this is shown in the article *St. Karol Wojtyla and St. Edith Stein on Human Individuality: "Pausing at the Irreducible" and Why Think About It* by Jose Adriand Emmanuel L. Layug. Layug first spells out the basic outlines of human individuality, according to Wojtyla and Stein. He explains why there is a need to rethink about human individuality or "pause at the irreducible." He also poses

some questions, and answers are given to encourage future studies regarding the irreducibility of human individuality.

St. John Paul II's pontificate and his teachings have inspired social and political changes in many parts of the world. In the article *Reception and Application of John Paul II's Anthropology in Slovakia During His Pontificate*, Katarína Valčová shows how his influence and inspiration was received in Slovakia. She evaluates the understanding of St. John Paul II's anthropological concept of the human being by Slovak theologians and philosophers during his pontificate. Through her exploration of the broader context of human beings' existence as a part of St. John Paul II's theology and philosophy, she shows the practical application of his anthropology to Slovak society in the communist and post-communist eras.

The dialogue between faith and reason takes central focus in St. John Paul II's encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio*, which generated broad application in religious studies. Gnana Patrick, in his article *John Paul II's Fides et Ration and Religious Studies in India*, tackles this application in his country. He argues that *Fides et Ratio* embodies a unique vision of the relationship between faith and reason, theology and philosophy, and mythos and ratio, which are premised on a dialectical mutuality, ever endeavoring to fulfill one another, even while opening new horizons of truth. According to Gnana, faith deepens with the arrival of the *propadeutic recta ratio*, and reason springs out of its weariness on the intimations of faith.

Another article that takes on St. John Paul II's influence, especially against the downfall of Communism in Eastern Europe, is the article *John Paul II's Legacy as a Resource for Fighting Totalitarianism: Slovak Experience* by Michal Valčo, Peter Šturák, Martina Pavlíková, and Gabriel Paľa. In the article, they identify and analyze St. John Paul II's most important efforts to fight totalitarianism from his early years to his ministry as Roman Pontiff and shows the ways in which his thoughts and actions inspired resistance in Czechoslovakia. They also suggest how his legacy may serve us today as we are confronted with old and new versions of totalitarianism, such as fascism, communism, hedonistic consumerism, nihilistic voluntarism, postmodern intellectual relativism, or religious fundamentalism.

We have noted the profound influence of St. John Paul II in the Philippines. In the article *Karol Wojtyła's Philosophy of the Human Person and the Filipino Contemporary Societal Issues*, Glenn G. Pajares tackles the Filipino societal issues and how these can be addressed through Wojtyła's philosophy of the human person. He discusses Wojtyła's teachings on the human person as a means to address and rectify the distorted outlook of the human person, which is the root cause of the many issues of contemporary Philippine society. Through Wojtyła's thoughts, the Filipino can understand himself and others as a human person and as a human being created in God's image and likeness.

One of the courses that Wojtyła taught as a professor of philosophy in Lublin is ethics, and one of the central concepts of his ethics is the "oughtness of the act," grounded on the efficacy of the human person. This concept is the focus of the article *The Experience of "I ought to do X": As the Ground for Moral Objectivity in Karol Wojtyła's Meta-Ethics* of Onyeukaziri Justin Nnaemeka. He attempts to explore Wojtyła's meta-ethics by discussing the person as an efficacious moral agent and the

objectivity of experience as subjective fact. He also delves into the experience of “I ought to do x” as the moral ground of human action.

One of St. John Paul II's most influential encyclicals is *Laborem Exercens*, which highlights the dignity of human work or labor. Juan Rafael G. Macaranas, in the article *Appropriating John Paul II's Laborem Exercens in Pedagogical Work*, applies the principles articulated in the encyclical to pedagogical work or the teacher's work. According to Macaranas, the *Laborem Exercens* offers a rational discourse that can serve as a timeless guide in examining work. He discusses John Paul II's personalistic view of the human person under the aspect of work and then appropriated this on work in pedagogy or teaching. He stresses that since work is always a personal action, it follows that the whole person, body and spirit, participates in it, whether manual or intellectual.

Another article that tackles the irreducibility of the human person is *Person, Cosmos, and Tradition: (Re-)Discovering the Irreducibility of the Human Person in the Philosophical Tradition with Karol Wojtyła and Eric Voegelin* by William Tullius. In the article, he presents a dialogue between Karol Wojtyła and Eric Voegelin's notions. He notes that Eric Voegelin develops a similar distinction to Wojtyła's personalist and cosmological understandings. He argues that a dialogue between the personalisms of Voegelin and Wojtyła may help advance Wojtyła's anthropology through the recovery of the classical movements in philosophy, which have been the carriers of the personalistic insight up to the present.

Marriage is one of the significant institutions that John Paul II preserved and safeguarded. Mark Joseph T. Calano, in *his article Marriage, Persons, and the Body: Thomistic Intimations in Karol Wojtyła*, thematically looks into marriage, persons, and the body through Wojtyła's personalism and Thomas Aquinas's notion of the composite person. He discusses the concept of marriage and the conjugal act, and the concept of the incommunicability of persons as Wojtyła articulates it with Thomas Aquinas. Through Thomas Aquinas' notion of the composite person and Wojtyła's notions of marriage and person, he also argues for the relational nature of the body.

Another article that highlights the significance of the human body is *The Personal Significance of the Human Body in Wojtyła's Philosophy of the Human Person* by Bai Ziqiang. He explores the body's personal significance in Wojtyła's philosophy of the human person by presenting Wojtyła's understanding of the human person and then Wojtyła's analysis of the human body as personal. He stresses that for Wojtyła, the human body is not completely reducible as a specific object of investigation. As a part of the whole that is the human person, the human body is also something that is irreducible and has a personal significance.

The debate on gender issues is one of the sensitive issues in our contemporary time, especially when we discuss gender equality. In the article, *The Divine Image and Communion of Persons: An Examination of Gender Issues in John Paul II*, Hyginus Chibuikwe Ezebuilo discusses John Paul II's commitment to gender equality. This notion of gender equality is based on a sacramental theology wherein nature images the divine and wherein the equality of man and woman is definitively biblical. According to Ezebuilo, for John Paul II, man and woman are equally persons and equally image of God in whose likeness, both were created. A problem arises when these equal images are sexually differentiated.

What is the meaning of true love? There is a varied articulation of this basic human feeling. In the article *True Love Shining Through the Eclipse of Conflation: Wojtyla's Notion of Love and the Machinations of Tolerance and Inclusion*, Ferdinand D. Delos Reyes tackles Wojtyla's notion of love vis-à-vis the attitude of tolerance and inclusion. According to Delos Reyes, love, which is the most basic emotion, the attitude proper and perfective of the human person and best manifested in the pouring out of oneself for the authentic good of the other, must not be oversimplified and conflated with notions that are diametrically opposed to it. Thus, in light of the intensity of how political correctness asserts itself, which allows something ugly to be seen as something beautiful, he presents Wojtyla's compendium of ideas and timeless articulation on the notion of love as a cause of authentic human flourishing.

Another institution that John Paul II safeguarded and preserved is the family, which is the central focus of his *Familiaris Consortio*. In the article *The Filipino Family in the Formation of Values in the Light of John Paul II's Familiaris Consortio*, Ivan Efreaim A. Gozum looks at the situation of the Filipino family in the light of John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio*. He provides a perspective on how one must look into the family in order to preserve its sanctity. He highlights the importance of the family in the formation of an individual to become morally upright citizens, and how the issues that modernization engendered can be addressed through the concepts found in the apostolic exhortation.

In the philosophical and scientific circles, a new form of atheism is now a focus of attention. Edmon D. Marquez shares his thoughts on this topic in his article *A Critique of the New Atheism in the Light of John Paul II's Fides et Ratio*. Marquez argues that the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* breaks away from these closed and mitigated conceptions of God and the world, and offers a balance between science and religion and between faith and reason. He elaborates what the encyclical states, that "faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth." He concludes that the search for truth, which is ultimately the search for God, is only made possible if both reason and faith work hand in hand.

Related to atheism is the problem of the perceived hiddenness of God in the world. Ian Anthony Davatos provides a response to this problem in his article, *The Problem of Divine Hiddenness: A Wojtylian Response*. Davatos notes that a new problem for theism has emerged - the problem of divine hiddenness. Thus, he formulates a Wojtylian response to the problem based on Wojtyla's view about the nature and extent of faith and its relationship to reason. He challenges Schellenberg's core assumption by arguing for the impossibility of addressing the problem without the need for religious faith. Thus, he stresses the implications of God's self-testimony in Jesus to the problem of divine hiddenness.

A defining feature of human nature is *concupiscéntia* or concupiscence – a strong sexual desire. Although it is connected to man's desire for the good, it is also related to moral evil. So what is the nature and origin of *concupiscéntia*? In the article *Concupiscéntia: Understanding Human Nature Through Bonaventure and Karol Wojtyla*, Joshua Cedric A. Gundayao answers this question. Through Bonaventure's philosophy which represents the medieval concept of *concupiscéntia*, he shows how this notion continues to exist in relation to human nature in contemporary time, as seen in Wojtyla's philosophy. He first tackles the notion of human nature in general and

then Bonaventure's notion of *concupiscéntia* and Wojtyla's concept of concupiscence, as found in *Love and Responsibility*. He also notes the convergence of Bonaventure and Wojtyla's perspectives and the continuity of the discussion on *concupiscéntia* in Christian philosophy.

These articles may not be exhaustive as to present the breadth and scope of the thoughts of St. John Paul II and its impact in our modern society. However, this collection clearly manifests the academic and personal interests that this extraordinary and great man and saint has generated among many scholars. Together with the *John Paul II Society of the Philippines*, the *Philippine National Philosophical Research Society of the Philippines*, the publisher of *Philosophia* is proud to present this *Special Commemorative Issue*. We hope our readers will enjoy reading these articles.

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